



coming home

to *Manilatown*

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL | 25th EVICTION COMMEMORATION | AUG 4th 2002





**MANILATOWN**  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION



社區  
華協中心

Chinatown Community  
Development Center

**IHSHI**

International Hotel  
Senior Housing Inc.

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I am pleased to announce on the 25th year since the eviction of the International Hotel tenants that construction has begun for a new International Hotel, 104 units of senior subsidized housing funded by the federal agency HUD and the City and County of San Francisco. The future home that will house the elderly and honor the tenants as heros with this 15 story landmark. The eight years that they fought to perserve their home and community was an inspiration that precipitated the movement to fuel the future construction after many of them died.

The sad truth is that in San Francisco and the country, housing to meet the expanding needs of those vulnerable and disabled is not a high priority. Homelessness and the displacement is accelerating because of the deep economic crisis that impacts us today. Affordable housing has never been a priority even in good economic times. There is an ongoing need for affordable and decent homes for families, elderly, the disabled, immigrants and rural populations like migratory farm workers. We must make it a non-negotiable demand to force local and federal government officials to address.

The new International Hotel centerpiece will be the Manilatown Center, a 2800 square feet of space on the ground floor that will house a performing arts community center and gallery. The center will capture the faces and historic circumstances of the International Hotel and the Manilatown Community. The archives will include a section of the City's housing crisis from the 50's to 70's when the City's Redevelopment Agency's uprooted and destroyed the Fillmore/Japantown and the Yerba Buena Communities. The Manilatown Center will serve as a vivid reminder of the fate of thousands of families and individuals who were displaced and forced to leave San Francisco or move to the Mission, Tenderloin and South of Market where conditions were already overcrowded. In the new International Hotel building, the past affordable housing struggles will be enshrined as a monument to honor those who organized and fought for their rights and homes. The Center will also be a means of redeeming the Manilatowns on the West Coast that were destroyed and replaced with commercial highrises and parking lots with no memorial to honor their contributions as farmworkers, cannery workers, seaman, veterans, restaurant workers and poets.

— Emil A. De Guzman, President Manilatown Heritage Foundation



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July 22, 2002

Emil A. De Guzman  
President  
Manilatown Heritage Foundation  
735 Cortland Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Greetings on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the eviction of the International Hotel, an important milestone for the Asian American community and for all of San Francisco.

The International Hotel was more than a residence for elderly Filipino and Chinese people. It was a symbol of the community they carved out in a new country. It became a reminder of the families they had nurtured here, the jobs they found, and the new lives they created for themselves. In buildings like the I-Hotel, they found the support they needed to make the transition to life in America.

Being evicted from this building meant more than homelessness; it meant losing a part of the self. It struck at the identity of these older men and women, who had worked so hard for their families and sacrificed so much.

While today's event is in many ways a sad memorial, it also evokes a distant rallying cry. Individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds came out in support of the residents of the I-Hotel. Newspaper photographs of the protests show signs in a variety of languages held by individuals representing nearly every group in our City's diverse population.

That spirited civic involvement is part of the reason why today is a celebration as well as a memorial. We look forward to a new International Hotel that will remind future generations of the community of immigrants that flourished here, and provide seniors with the low-cost housing that they urgently need.

I regret that I was unable to attend the ceremony today, and I offer my best wishes for a meaningful and festive celebration. Thank you, Mr. De Guzman and the Heritage Foundation, for your efforts on behalf of the City's Asian American community, and your work to preserve the memory of this important moment in our City's history.



Sincerely,

*Nancy Pelosi*

NANCY PELOSI  
Member of Congress





## GREETINGS FROM THE MAYOR

July 22, 2002

Dear Friends:


On behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, I would like to welcome the Manongs, the Manangs and the participants of the International Hotel's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration, honoring the tenants who were evicted a quarter of a century ago, taking place August 4, 2002 at Portsmouth Square.

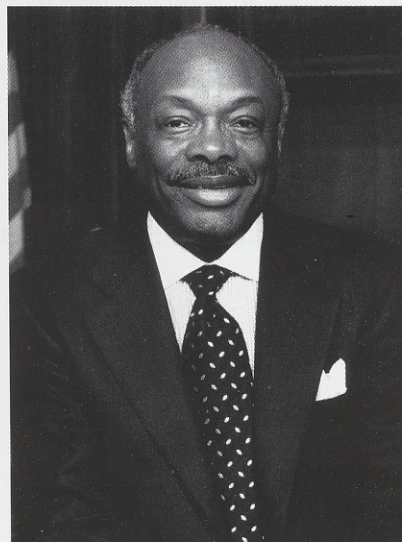
The struggle of the International Hotel inspired me as a young politician to address the needs of seniors and communities of color. I continue to be committed to providing affordable housing in San Francisco and to work with the community to preserve the richness of its ethnic heritage.

I would also like to acknowledge the participants instrumental in making this project a reality: Manilatown Heritage Foundation, Chinatown Community Development Corporation, Kearny Street Housing Corporation, Archdiocese of San Francisco and Saint Mary's Catholic Center.

It's my honor to be a part of this historic and proud moment in San Francisco history. I wholeheartedly will observe with you the rise of the International Hotel.

With warmest regards,

  
WILLIE L. BROWN, Jr.  
Mayor





20 year-old Ben Abarca in 1952

# Memories of Manilatown

By Dioscoro R. Recio

**A**s he runs a hand through his gray hair, he tries hard to remember the names and businesses that once thrived on San Francisco's Kearny Street. With a gleam in his eye and a gulp in his throat, he suddenly recollects stories that have long been stowed away in his memory.

These stories come back to him like the Manilatown wind that swirls in all the hearts of the children of the Manong generation.

"There was this one time when this young fellow was broke and down on his luck," remembered 70-year-old Ben Abarca. "He walked into the pool hall and Small Montana, a previous featherweight boxing champ, put a hat on the table and said 'hey you boys, put some money here, we will help this guy out.' And just like that, a collection was started."

"This was the kind of place it was, this was the kind of people who were there. They didn't have much, except for each other."

Elegant, proud and lively were just some of the words that Abarca used to describe the early Filipino immigrants who came to America in search of the American Dream in the early 1900's. They had largely lived in the squalor of cheap residential hotels and worked menial jobs, like farm laborer, domestic helper and ship hands, that the dominant society simply did not want to do. As a young man, Abarca spent much of his youth with these men in the 1950's and has a collection of stories not found in trendy bookstores or college lecture halls.

A Seattle native, he was born 1932 to a Filipino pioneer known as a "Manong" and a mother, who was a dust bowl settler from Oklahoma. His father first came to Hawai'i to work in the sugarcane plantations and ventured to the mainland in

1919. The Abarca clan eventually moved to San Francisco's North Beach area in 1939.

At this time tensions were high towards minorities, so when bystanders observed the Abarca family strolling the streets, they were often met with prejudice and hatred.

"I can remember as a young boy people pointing at us and calling my mother a 'whore,' he said candidly. "Neighbors would have their children pick fights with us, because we were mixed."

It didn't take long for the family to resettle into the more diverse and tolerant Fillmore District.

If this was the sentiment that a young Abarca had to endure, it was unimaginable what the Manongs and other Asian immigrants had to face.

"That's why the memory of Manilatown is so important," said Abarca. "These men had to deal with racism and anti-Asian laws that prohibited them from marrying, buying land and being treated as equals. They paved the way for us."

Selling "The Call Bulletin" newspaper on Kearny Street was Abarca's first job. He recalled soliciting the paper on the ten-block stretch of the Manilatown enclave before corporate development devastated the area. At ten years old, he said shop owners frequently treated him to Filipino foods, ice cream and soda pop. He said he was treated like family, because many of the people didn't have much family here in the United States.

"All those old-timers, they were worthy of the highest respect," he said. "Without them, we wouldn't be where we are now. They were tremendous people and had so much dignity."

Abarca admitted that as a young man, pursuing an



education was not his passion. In 1946 he worked on a fishing boat in Alaska and at the age of 14 he lied about his age and entered the U.S. Army in 1947. After serving in Korea, he returned to Kearny Street in 1952 where, as a veteran he was a recipient of the 20/52 program.

"That means 20-bucks a week for 52-weeks," he humbly explained. "We had to grow up fast in those days and people were very independent."

And grow up he did. He lived in the Yolanda Hotel on Kearny and California Streets, where he bought meals for 47 cents and he paid 6 dollars for rent per week.

"Kearny Street was a beautiful place filled with nice and generous people," he said. "There were Filipino pool halls, boxing halls, restaurants, barber shops and night clubs. The Corrigador Club and the Mabuhay Gardens were always very popular."

Describing a typical weekend, Abarca remembers the camaraderie of the Manongs playing cards and shooting pool. He said that whoever was winning would go out and buy everybody drinks. He said that mestisas and white women would come around and sell lumpia and corn on the cob.

"These men had to deal with racism and anti-Asian laws... they paved the way for us" — Ben Abarca

"Some of my fondest memories in the 1950's were when an impromptu band would play and everybody would begin to dance," Abarca said. "The musicians would share their instruments with different people in the audience and everybody would take turns singing. Filipinos really love to dance."

Abarca said that Filipinos looked especially sharp in their MacIntosh suits, derby hats and shined shoes, which they wore on the weekends. He said they had a lot of pride even though they were treated unfairly by society.

"Sometimes that pride would get them in trouble," he admitted. "These Filipinos were tough, if you looked at them the wrong way, they would feel attacked."

On a lighter note, tensions were always calmed with food. Abarca recalled the fine kitchen crew at the Golden Pheasant restaurant on Geary and Powell Streets. He also spoke highly of Johnny Bulanglang at the Bataan cafe, who made an exquisite Ilocano dish called Bulanglang.

"Johnny Bulanglang wasn't his real name, but that's what people would call him," he said with a infectious smirk. "As one of the only young Filipinos there, Kearny Street was a real beautiful place."

Abarca later became a successful businessman and together with his wife Susan, who teaches at City College of San Francisco, assisted the aging Manongs who had other family support with senior support services.

"I have nothing but the highest respect for those men," he said.



Loading a ship for the Alaska fish industry, leaving from Seattle





By Dioscoro R. Recio

**I**t wasn't a fashion statement, but more of a way for people to know that she was a Filipina.

As if being part of the "First Family of Manilatown" wasn't good enough, Carmen Choy had the word "Pinay" tattooed on her arm to let people know who she was.

"Outside of my family, there weren't any Filipino children running around while I was growing up on Kearny Street," she explained. "I got a tattoo, so people wouldn't get me confused."

The only thing she is confused about these days is why the City and County of San Francisco evicted tenants and tore down the International Hotel, and left an empty lot in its place for close to 25 years. Only now, has momentum gained to rebuild 104 units of low-income senior housing on Kearny and Jackson Streets.

"The International Hotel should have never been torn down, and those old-timers should have been respected," she said. "They deserved better."

Born Carmencita Salvacion Monteclaro in to a large family that lived in an apartment on Broadway and Grant Streets in San Francisco, she speaks of the Filipino immigrant experience with passion and dignity.

"My dad would always take me down to the pool halls and restaurants and show me off when I was young," she recalled. "I would bounce around from knee to knee. They took a special interest in me because the old-timers in those days didn't have families of their own."

Choy was referring to the pioneers of the Filipino immigrant experience in America, who were known as the "Manongs." This group of predominantly young men had arrived in the U.S. after the 1900's and were responsible for developing the

agricultural and industrial eras of society. The Manongs were also subjected to racist laws that prevented them from receiving a decent education, owning land, voting, marrying and being treated as equals prior to Civil Rights legislation.

"My father arrived in 1918 and served as a G.I. in World War II, and worked as a combat cook," she said. "After the war, he petitioned my for my mom."

As a youth, Choy had countless interactions with the Manongs. She recollects her mother trying to enter her into beauty contests. Choy admitted that her sister was more interested in the pomp and circumstance of the culture. Meanwhile, Carmen was more concerned with having new experiences and meeting new people.

"People accepted you for who you were," she said.

Choy remembers the big parties hosted by different Philippine town associations. She said she grew up expecting big pig roasts, colorful evening gowns and dances that lasted deep into the night.

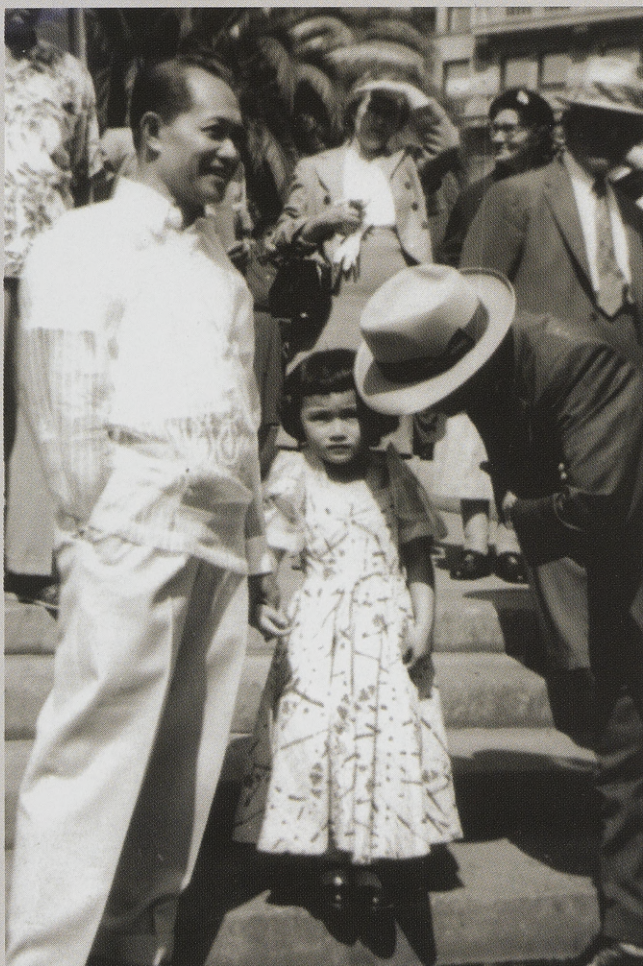
"Everybody knew my dad, because he made homemade lumpia wrappers," she said. "Whenever there was a big party coming up, they would all look for him."

Choy said that her father was a master chef and more than a few times did she peak over his shoulder to learn family recipes.

Speaking of her mother, Choy said that she was involved with the senior center that was housed at 916 Kearny Street by community activist and poet Al Robles, which had formed in the late 60's and early 70's.

"My mom was helping out with the old-timers before the





I-Hotel eviction," she said. "They needed help with filling out social security papers, finding support services and housing. She had a lot of fun with the Manongs and Manangs."

"When I was hospitalized from a stroke, the nurses were scared because I was speaking in Pilipino...and recounting conversations I had with old-timers. It was weird because I don't speak Pilipino." —Carmen Choy

"She tried to make their last remaining years as comfortable as possible," Choy continued. "By the time of the I-Hotel eviction many elders had passed away."

The Manilatown experience was so profound for Choy that she had revelations at a poignant time in her life.

"When I was hospitalized from a stroke, the nurses were scared because I was speaking in Pilipino and telling them stories about growing up on Kearny Street and recounting conversations I had with the old-timers," she said. "It was weird, because I don't speak Pilipino."

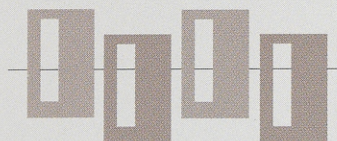
"After I recovered, I was told about that experience, I know that I belong to something special," she continued.

Today, Choy is an active member of the Filipino American

Democratic Club and the Association. She balances being a wife, mother and grandmother and works for the Department of Justice at the Attorney General's office.

"When I retire I would like to become the manager of the I-Hotel," she said with conviction. "I am very happy and excited that the International Hotel will open."

It is fair to say that she is as proud as the tattoo on her arm.





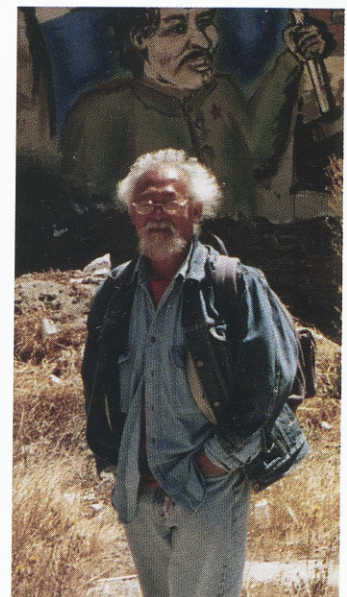
aishiteimasu  
 i love you  
 manong al robles sings songs  
 of love to manongs  
 in the i hotel  
 listen  
 manong freddie plays his banjo  
 listen  
 manong legaspi recites his latest ode  
 aishiteimasu  
 manongs rise from fallen wood  
 of international hotel  
 rise from ashes  
 their tongues like flames  
 al robles your sweet laughter  
 in the shadow of profiteer pyramids  
 shatters the windows of glass hearts  
 your voice more melancholy than shakuhatchi  
 that flutters like wings of sound  
 across a river of dust  
 international hotel is sacred burial ground  
 for ancestor manongs  
 who keep memory of manilatown  
 still we smell their bagoong  
 adobo  
 rice and tea steaming in the fog of dawn  
 aishiteimasu  
 al robles  
 keeps vigil over  
 these streets  
 where manongs wander homeless  
 gathers them up like caribao  
 al robles  
 shaman  
 gathers monks  
 seeking mountains of bamboo  
 al robles  
 poet  
 feasts on fishhead soup  
 green tea  
 brews words like turnips  
 gobo  
 roots growing from the body of poets  
 angels appear  
 on the lips of taxidancers  
 al robles dwells  
 where pain is sweet like monju  
 warm as fresh goat's blood  
 louder than gunfire  
 silent as morning on eyelid of night  
 aishiteimasu al robles  
 sleepless poet  
 writes inside the belly of fish  
 a thousand poems swim  
 mission  
 chinatown  
 manilatown  
 tenderloin  
 japanton  
 northbeach  
 agbayani  
 hanoi  
 blackhills  
 appalachia  
 delano  
 mindanao

# A Thousand Pilipino Songs

## for Al Robles

st mary's belltower  
 artists  
 hookers  
 nuns  
 children  
 workers  
 crazy people  
 cracked bells  
 ring out  
 your thousand songs  
 at midnight  
 i love you  
 i love you  
 love begets revolution  
 revolution  
 like earth's turning  
 manongs seek home  
 justice  
 revolution in our tongues  
 of live cinders  
 manongs we do not forget  
 because  
 his  
 words are steady  
 burning  
 in a river afire  
 with a thousand pilipino songs  
 shakuhatchi flutters  
 like wings of sound  
 aishiteimasu  
 aishite imasu  
 i love you al robles.

Janice Mirikitani



\*Quoted from poem title and inspired by  
 "A Thousand Pilipino Songs: Ako ay Pilipino" by  
 Al Robles





Lucky M Pochail (circa late 1960's)





**In this 25th year  
of  
commemorating  
the eviction,  
heartfelt  
congratulations  
to all in the  
community who  
have made the  
I-Hotel  
homecoming a  
reality.**

**Rise I-Hotel  
rise!**

**Mabuhay ang  
Manilatown  
Heritage  
Foundation!  
Let us continue  
the fight for  
decent, low  
income housing.**

Alexander P. de Guia, Chatsworth, CA

Jovita Caballero de Guia- Chatsworth, CA

Alex de Guia-Emeryville, CA

Rex de Guia- Emeryville, CA

Jocelyn de Guia-Brooklyn, NY

Rasmina Kirmani-Brooklyn, NY



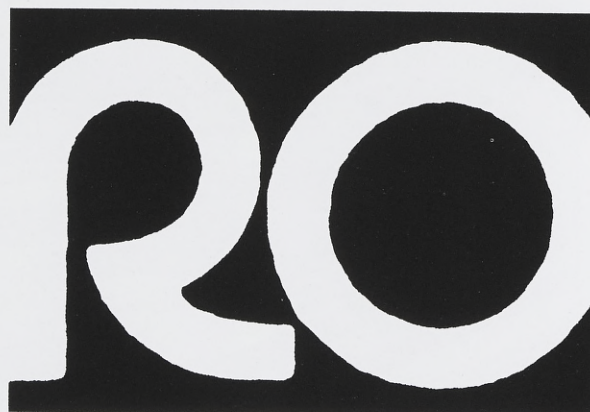
Taken July 19, 2002 from the corner of Jackson and Kearny. The sights and sound of construction trumpet the people's victory!



In solidarity we praise the efforts of the Asian American community in fighting for social justice.

**"LONG LIVE THE I-HOTEL"**

From **James E. Roberts-Obayashi Corporation**  
general contractor in the Bay Area since 1932.







**CHINESE  
PROGRESSIVE  
ASSOCIATION**

The members, board and staff at CPA  
Honor

## The International Hotel 25th Eviction Commemoration

The spirit of struggle for the I-hotel  
continues  
keep fighting to preserve our communities



Chinese Progressive Association

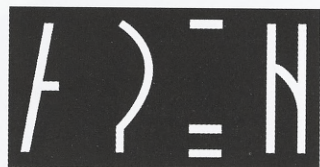
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San Francisco, CA 94111

Tel: (415) 391-6986

Fax: (415) 391-6897

[cpa@mail.ewind.com](mailto:cpa@mail.ewind.com)



### Welcome Home, I Hotel!

*In Love & Solidarity,  
Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)*

[www.apen4ej.org](http://www.apen4ej.org)  
510.834.8920



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### Women of Color Resource Center Congratulates I-Hotel on Coming Home!



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[www.coloredgirls.org](http://www.coloredgirls.org)



# MABUHAY!

## *International Hotel*



**Pete O. Lapid and Associates, Inc.**  
**Consulting Electrical Engineers**

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Long Live the  
I-Hotel!

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# I-HOTEL!

# RISE!



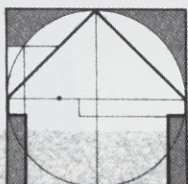
*Best Wishes*

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**M · H · D · C**  
**Mission Housing Development Corporation**

*Salutes the struggle of the Tenants of the I Hotel*

***"Mabuhay ang International Hotel!"***

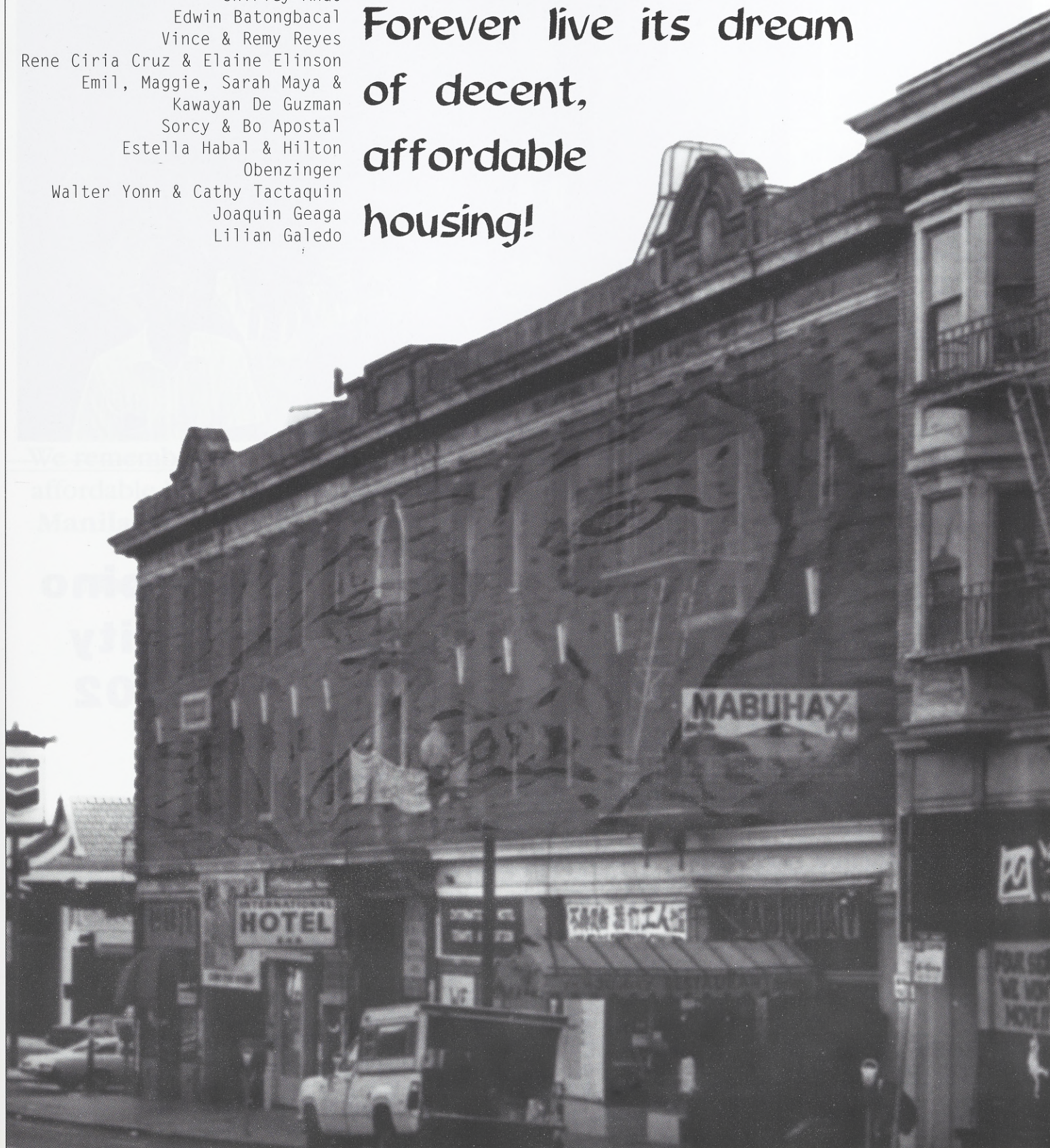


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Kawayan De Guzman  
Sorcy & Bo Apostol  
Estella Habal & Hilton  
Obenzinger  
Walter Yonn & Cathy Tactaquin  
Joaquin Geaga  
Lilian Galedo

**Long live the memory  
and spirit of the  
International Hotel struggle!  
Forever live its dream  
of decent,  
affordable  
housing!**





*In solidarity for social justice and community empowerment!*

*Long live the I-Hotel!*

**South of Market  
Employment Center**

A Project of MHH

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San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 865-2105

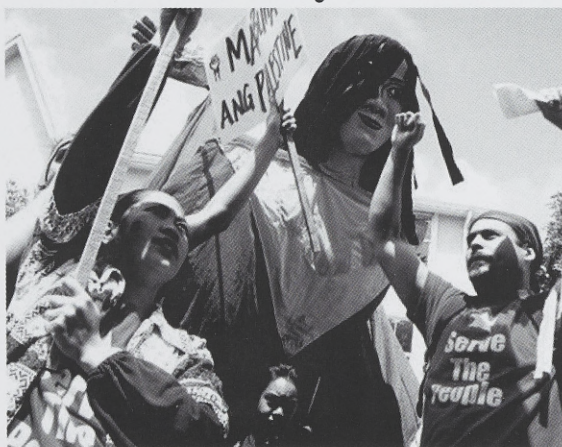
Fax: (415) 865-2102

email: somec@pacbell.net

MISSION **MHH**  
HIRING HALL



**Mabuhay!!!**



**Filipino Coalition  
For Global Justice, Not War**

\*\*\*

**LONG LIVE THE I-HOTEL!**

**In memory of our Manongs and Manangs,  
we raise our fists and continue the struggle!!**

**U.S. OUT OF THE PHILIPPINES NOW!!!**

\*\*\*

*Filipinos for Global Justice, Not War is a multi-sector coalition of women, youth, student, human rights, civil rights, and community organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area who have come together to call for the end of the cycle of violence brought on by retaliatory war, racism and state repression. Current campaigns of the FilsGlobe coalition are Justice for Airport Screeners, U.S. Out of the Philippines, and Absconders. For more information, pinoyactions@yahoo.com*



**Pilipino  
Unity  
2002**

*call for supporters/participants*

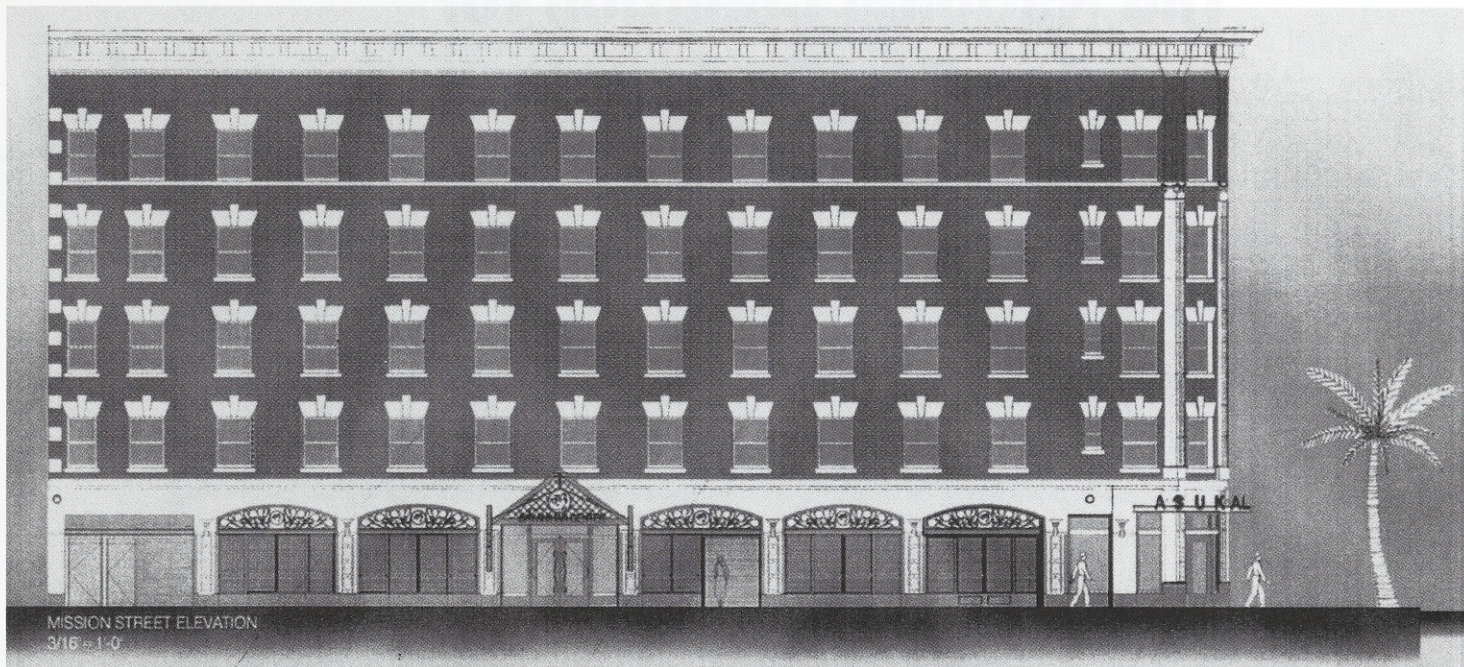
**from Ang MAGKAISA PRODYEKT,  
organizers of PILIPINO UNITY,  
including RIZAL DAY in SF last December**

**>>>inviting all PIN@Y performers, artists and  
organizers to send demos and/or join the organizing  
for upcoming programming on-air and for the ANNUAL  
PILIPINO UNITY EVENTS in the SF bay area...**

**Past beneficiaries: Manilatown Heritage, GABRIELA,  
TAMBALAN, AKIL DREAM FUND, MINT MALL ORGANIZING, &  
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**MAGKAISA Prodyekt kontakt:  
415.431.7536**





BAYANIHAN COMMUNITY CENTER  
GROUND FLOOR  
MISSION STREET AT 6<sup>TH</sup> STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

We remember the brave men and women who dared to stand up for their right to affordable housing 25 years ago. We also offer our heartfelt congratulations to the **Manilatown Heritage Foundation** on the rebirth of the **International Hotel**.

**May the new I-Hotel stand as a symbol of the spirit of Bayanihan.**

***MABUHAY ANG I-HOTEL!***



Bahay-Bayanan \_ Filipino Business Assistance \_ Ethnotourism

**Filipino-American Development Foundation**  
965 Mission Street, Suite 220  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
415.348.8042



# The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development

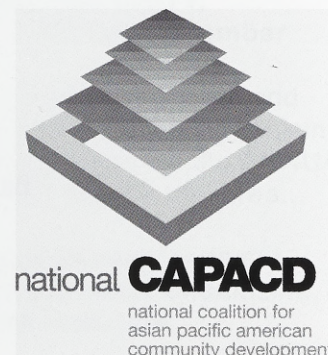


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[www.nationalcapacd.org](http://www.nationalcapacd.org)

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**Norman P. Ishimoto**  
President

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*We salute the  
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The National Network  
salutes the 25th Anniversary  
of the International Hotel struggle:  
Dignity, affordable housing, &  
immigrant rights is in the heart!

*We congratulate the Manilatown Heritage Foundation  
as it breaks ground to build the New International  
Hotel where the tough spirits of so many Filipino and  
Chinese migrant workers will finally get the recognition,  
rest, and respect they so strongly fought for.*

*Mabuhay ang pakikibaka ng I-Hotel!*

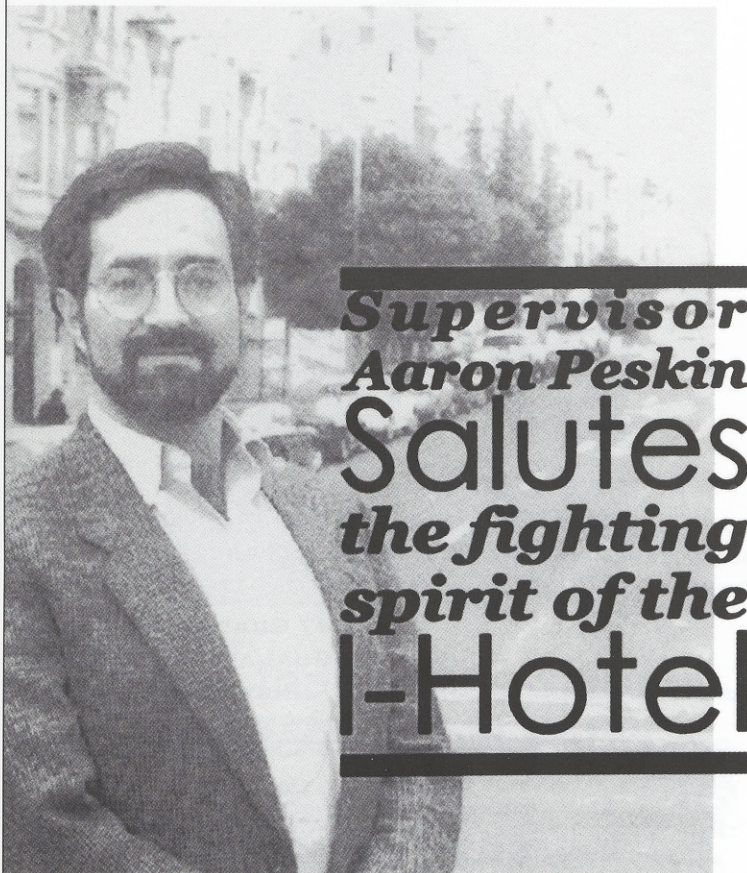
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**Supervisor  
Aaron Peskin  
Salutes  
the fighting  
spirit of the  
I-Hotel**

*At last we are underway!  
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on your 25th  
anniversary!*



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*Long live the International Hotel Struggle!*

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# MANILATOWN RISES!

***SALAMAT, Manilatown Heritage Foundation, for  
carrying on the I-Hotel struggle.***

**BEYOND LUMPIA & that bamboo dance PRODUCTIONS**



**I salute the fighting spirit of  
the International Hotel!**

***Tom Ammiano,  
President San Francisco  
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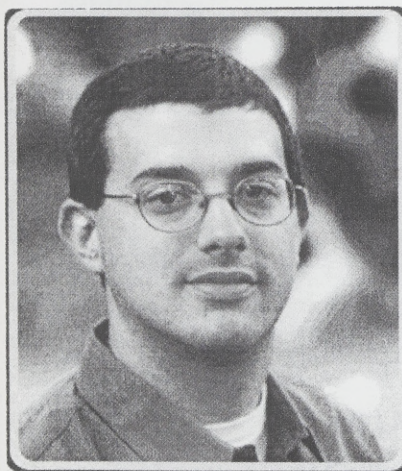
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Email: [reallcompany@cs.com](mailto:reallcompany@cs.com)

Congratulations to Manila Heritage Foundation in making "Coming Home to Manilatown" a reality, especially for our seniors. Your perseverance and commitment to this decades long struggle is an inspiration to all of us. Let's continue the fight for justice and affordable housing for all!



LONG  
LIVE  
THE  
I-HOTEL!

MABUHAY!

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature of Chris Daly in ink.  
Chris Daly



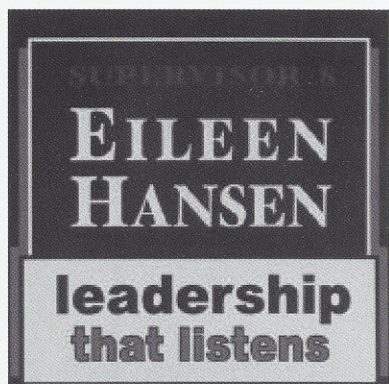
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CONGRATULATIONS!

*We honor coming home...*

*We respect the struggle...*

*We will never forget.*

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FOUNDATION!

Reme Grefalda  
&  
Carlene Sobrino Bonnivier

Thank you for continuing to  
inspire us to build, preserve, and  
defend affordable housing.

Congratulations on  
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from former members of

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and  
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at the I-Hotel

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**In solidarity with the 25th Year  
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**KEEP THE STRUGGLE ALIVE**

***The Louie Family***

Joining the celebration  
***Coming Home to Manilatown***  
after 25 years  
**Long Live the I Hotel!**

Ronaldo Lopes de Oliveira  
& Karen Tei Yamashita



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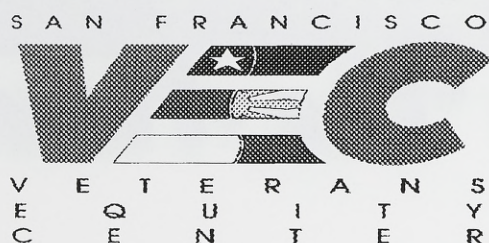




The struggle continues at the Mint Mall and beyond...  
Help preserve the SoMa Pilipino community of San Francisco against today's threats of displacement and gentrification. In the spirit of the I-Hotel, let's send a clear reminder: "WE WON'T MOVE!"

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**Congratulations to the  
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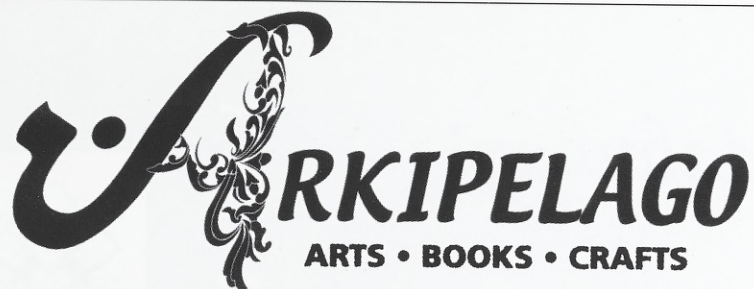
*Mabuhay  
ang  
I-Hotel!*



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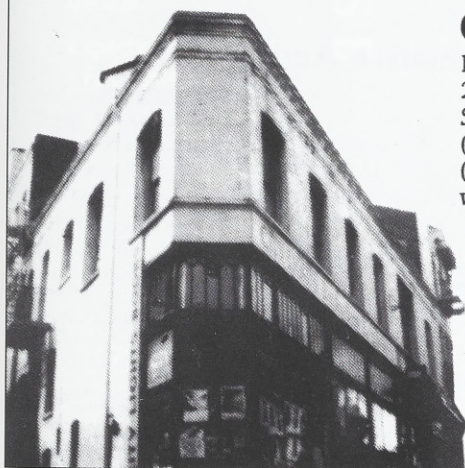
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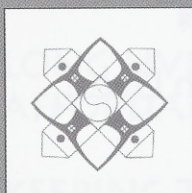
*Mabuhay Ang I - Hotel!*

faa@filipinos4action.org



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社區

The new International Hotel Senior Housing will include 104 apartment units for very low-income seniors, a meal site, and Manilatown Heritage Foundation's Culture Center to honor the contributions of the once-thriving Manilatown that surrounded the site. The International Hotel Senior Housing and St. Mary's Chinese School and Center will be built over the Archdiocese of San Francisco's four-story underground ☐ garage.

Expected Completion:  
Fall 2004

FULFILLING THE PROMISE

CHINATOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER IS PROUD TO BE A SPONSOR/DEVELOPER OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL HOTEL SENIOR HOUSING.

# LONG LIVE THE I-HOTEL!

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS: Chinatown Community Development Center  
International Hotel Citizens Advisory Committee  
Kearny Street Housing Corporation  
Manilatown Heritage Foundation ☐

FUNDERS: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing  
Washington Mutual Foundation  
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ARCHITECTURE TEAM: Gordon H Chong & Partners, Herman Coliver Architects,  
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CONSTRUCTION TEAM: Transworld Construction, Inc. and  
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**Who We Are ..** The California Transplant Donor Network, a federally designated organ procurement organization (OPO), is committed to providing the opportunity to improve and extend lives through organ and tissue donation for transplantation.

**Congratulations I-Hotel!**

—From your friends at the California Transplant Donor Network,  
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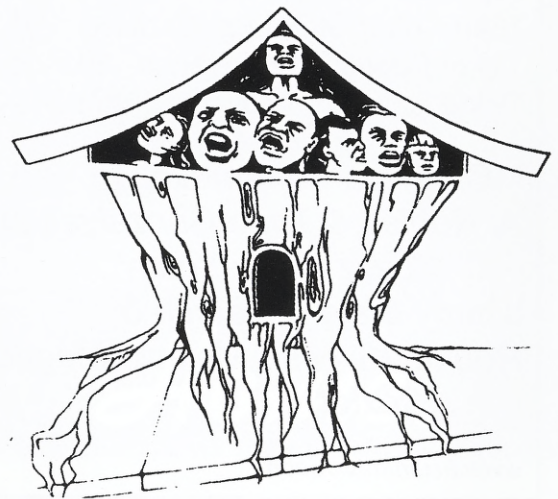


MAKIBAKA! HUWAG MATAKOT!

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*"The struggle continues.  
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Thanks for keeping us  
focused after all these  
years."*

**Supervisor  
Mark Leno**

*International Hotel MANSEI!*



*Jamae Sori Sister Sound*



**Congratulations**  
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on "Coming Home" to ManilaTown!  
We are proud to continue the struggle  
for SRO tenants in San Francisco.*

*In solidarity,  
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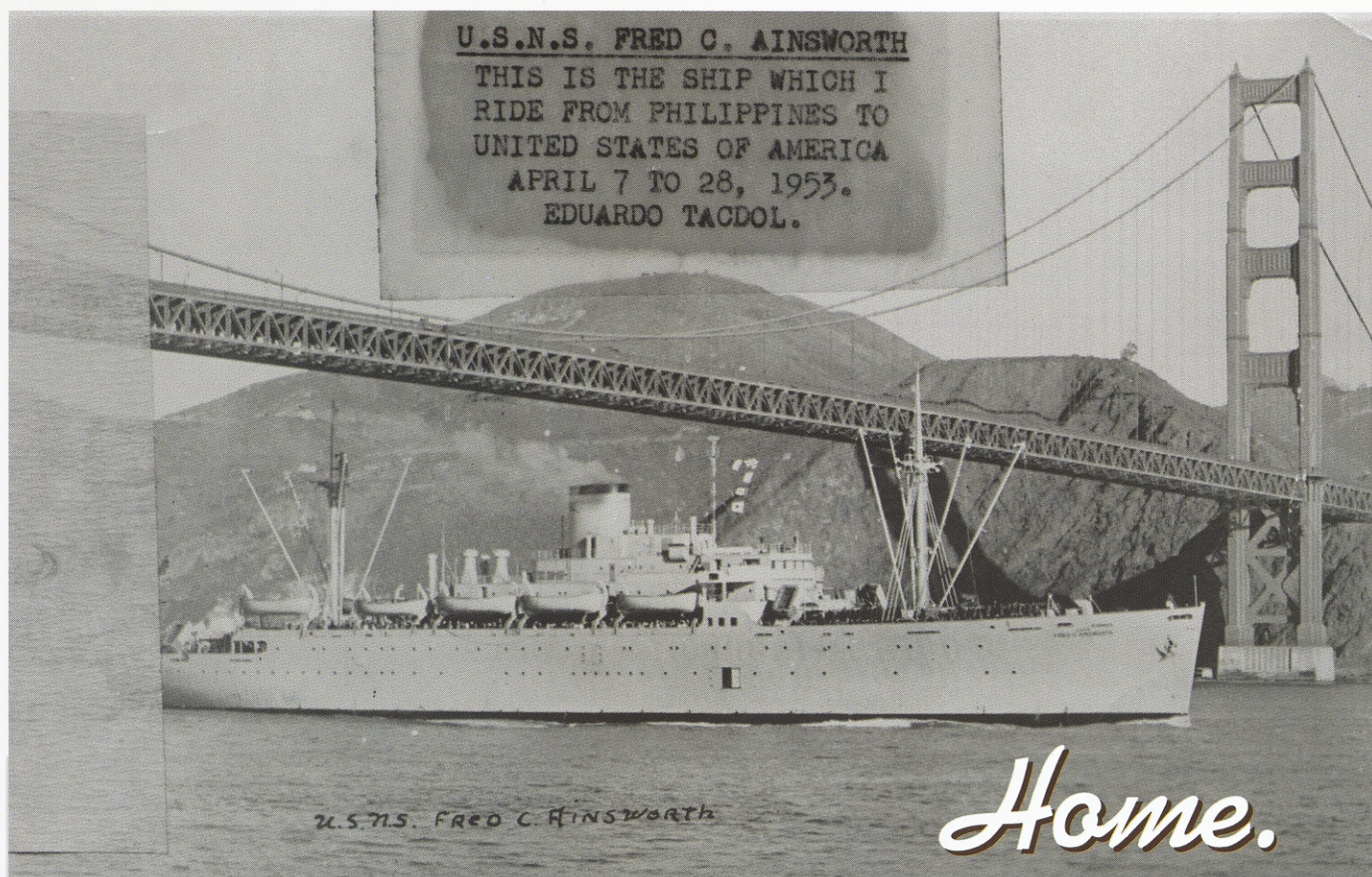
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By Andrea Tacdol

I remember my lolo, my great-grandfather, as the grumpy old man who sat on a stool beside his bed reading magazines and playing checkers. He wore black Converse high-tops (similar to the ones that I would later get). Rarely leaving his room during family parties, my cousins and I might provoke him out by screaming loudly in the hallway playing hot lava. When I was a little older, he ordered my sister and me a chemistry set, a microscope, and a magnifying glass from catalogs with hopes that someday we would become scientists. Each present was marked with the date in his old-world handwriting. For a long time, this was all I knew of him.

My great-grandfather, Eduardo Tacdol, passed away on October 18, 1992, shortly after his 92nd birthday. I was only 12 years-old and, at the time, more interested in boys, eye-liner, and going to Great America than sitting down with him to ask him about his life. This is one of my major regrets. Luckily, my great-grandfather left a trail of records, papers, and documents of the important events in his life. Now that I am older, I follow that trail, searching for my own history and identity as a young Filipina American. My memory of him has grown to include the stories told by my grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles. It includes his written accounts scribbled into small black books and pictures he hid away. My grandfather's story has shaped our family's history and created a new path that has brought us to many places and cities around the world. We have had many homes. The International Hotel is our first home in America. It is in the rise of the I-Hotel and the hope of a new Manilatown that the past, present, and future of our community and my personal history intersects

and gives me hope.

"... August 1919, I run away from school. I went to Tarlac where the recruiting office for the Philippine Scouts under U.S. Army and I enlist. On 3rd of September I take my oath."

—Eduardo Tacdol, scribbled on some yellow paper

When my Lolo left school, he began a chain of events that would lead him to America. He began his career in the military. While enlisted, he met Brigida Garcia, a woman from Manila and was married on the 16th of May 1923. They had six children: Rodolfo (my Grandfather), Librada, Rosalinda, Alfonso, Florenio, and Carmelita. On December 8, 1941, Japan attacked the Philippines hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. My great grandfather fought nearly four months along the inland and coastal areas of Corregidor, but was injured and "hit by enemy Bomb-shrap-nels, in my left leg" as he wrote in paperwork to the military. Upon injury, on April 6, 1942 he was brought to the United States Army Malinta Tunnel Hospital.

While my great-grandfather was recovering in the hospital, the Japanese forces overwhelmed the Filipino and American soldiers who later surrendered in Bataan. Lolo was released from treatment in the hospital and forced to participate in the Death March. He collapsed and was held in custody by soldiers. My great-grandmother begged the Japanese soldiers





Eduardo Tacdol (left) and friend, Jose Catubig, in Tacdo's International Hotel room.

to release her husband. Certain he would not survive, they agreed to release him in exchange for some my grandmother's jewels. Miraculously, he survived and regained his health. After the war, he was honorably discharged from the United States Army on March 16, 1952 and received a Purple Heart. Few soldiers knew that they had the opportunity to apply for citizenship and immigrate to America. My lola was one of them. After obtaining citizenship in the Philippines, on April 7, 1953, he boarded the U.S.N.S. Fred C. Ainsworth and endured a twenty-one day voyage to San Francisco. He had dreams of a better and more comfortable life for his family. Upon his arrival, he stayed at the International Hotel.

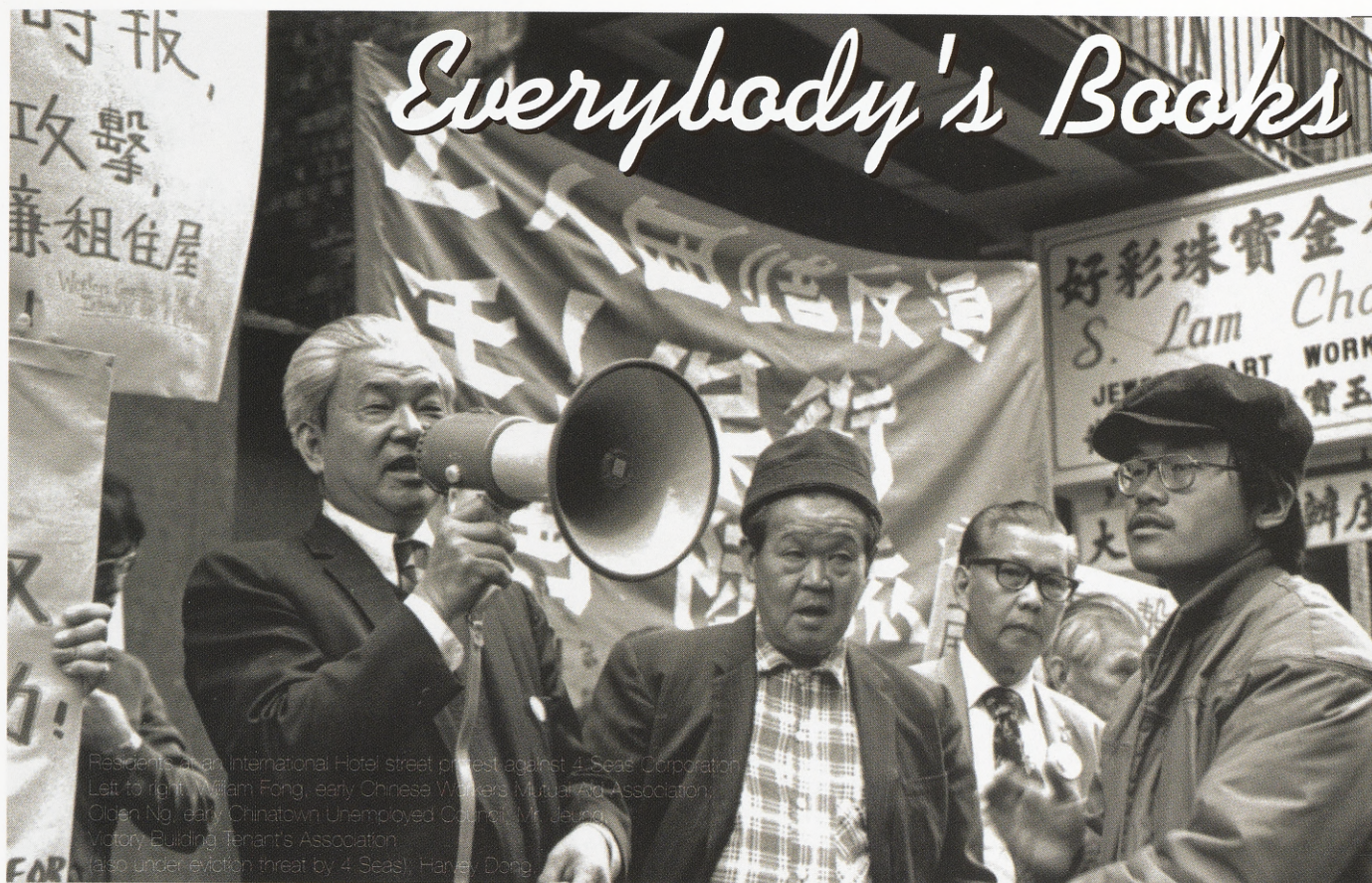
Finding a job with the U.S. postal service, he began to save money for his family. He hoped to bring everyone to America and began to learn about the application process of petitioning family members, getting social security numbers, and becoming a citizen. He began to file the paperwork needed to petition his own family. He also typed letters in Ilocano to send home and expressed his loneliness and dreams of being with his wife again. It was April 15, 1955 when his two teenage sons, Florenio and Alfonso, joined him in the International Hotel. The three stayed in one small room. Flor remembers the unusual smell of the hotel, the crowded kitchen, and the Filipino restaurants downstairs.

Florenio and Alfonso began to make friends at the I-Hotel. While most of the people were old-timers, there was a small group of youth that were also the sons of Veterans. The brothers found fulltime work at a nursery in Colma. After work, they spent time playing cards and pool or eating at local restaurants. Lolo warned them to stay out of trouble and they attempted to even though fights between the "locals," as they called themselves, and the Navy men on leave were frequent.

While Flor and Alfonso, were going out on Kearny Street with their barkada, my great grandfather sat in their shared room in the I-Hotel with his typewriter. At the time, people called him Sergeant Tacdol, his rank in the U.S. Army of the Philippines during World War II. Most weekends, especially in the off-season, when the I-Hotel was bustling with manongs who worked in the Central Valley, my lolo was typing up petition forms and citizenship applications for others. These papers were created to ask the government to allow a few family members to come to America, prove that they could afford to support them, and explain why they should be given the opportunity to come to America. There would often be four or more anxious friends, barrio-mates, fellow residents of the I-hotel or acquaintances packed in his room seeking assistance. He did not charge anyone for his help, but sometimes accepted money to help pay for envelopes, paper, and postage. Never receiving any formal training to offer such services, he read all he could on the subject. He also befriended an Italian American lawyer on Columbus Street who would sometimes look over the paperwork and answer any questions he might have.

Many of these petitions were successful. In our family, our lolo was able to petition his wife, 6 children, more than 20 grandchildren, and a number of distant family members and their friends. The status of the hundreds of petitions he filed for others Filipino Americans is unknown. As our family came to America, lolo moved out of the I-Hotel, to create a home in the Mission where he and his wife would welcome all of our family and friends that immigrated to America. The I-Hotel was the beginning of a chain of Filipino Americans helping each other in their new home.





Residents of an International Hotel street protest against 4 Seas Corporation. Left to right: William Fong, early Chinese Workers Mutual Aid Association; Olson Ng, early Chinatown Unemployed Council; Mr. Jeung, Victory Building Tenant's Association (also under eviction threat by 4 Seas); Harvey Dong.

By Dioscoro R. Recio

**W**hen Harvey Dong lectures on the International Hotel in his Asian American Studies classes at UC Berkeley, he speaks his truth from a first-hand experience.

Dong, a product of the Third World Student Strike in 1969, came of age and was shaped by the radical politics and cultural awareness that defined his generation. He brings his relevant perspectives and refreshing insights from street demonstrations, to having deep conversations with the old-timers that roamed Manilatown and from running Everybody's Bookstore on Kearny Street, which was located on the ground level of the I-Hotel in the early 1970's.

"Yeh, it's kind of weird sometimes when I'm talking about the Asian American community struggle to my students, and then knowing that I was part of it all," said Dong, who still bellows passion in his voice for social justice and educational relevance.

Other Cal students like Emil DeGuzman, Belvin Louie, Lillian Galedo, Judy Kojiwara and Dong all used their experience as student organizers and brought back that knowledge to the community.

"We opened up the bookstore to give people information on the Asian American experience that you couldn't find anywhere else in the country," he recalled. "We were located on the ground floor of the I-Hotel next to Tino's Barber Shop. We got a real taste of community life which was real different from the college campus."

In the early days, what Dong remembers most was his neighbors. He said that at Tino's there was always banjo music and bands that would play all day. Young people accustomed

to the guitar riffs of Jimi Hendrix gained a whole new perspective.

His other neighbors at the ground level of the I-Hotel area was the Mabuhay Gardens, a Mecca for young hipsters, budding entertainment and social interaction. Joaquin Legaspi, the poet who coined the phrase "Manilatown" ran the Manilatown Information Center, which was established to give seniors social service assistance. Dong also said the Asian Student Field Service Office was set up to help foreign exchange students. The Chinatown Youth Council also resided in a storefront.

Meanwhile, inside the Hotel, DeGuzman ran the International Hotel Tenants Association and a revolutionary group of young Filipino men and women, known as the KDP, also held down an office space.

Later other groups like the Kearny Street Workshop, the Chinese Progressive Association and the Asian Community Center took up spots in the I-Hotel.

"Everybody's Books was the first Asian American bookstore in the country," boasted Dong. "There was a great mix of people from seniors, to social service workers, youth, college students, activists and artists. People would come to get information and find out what was going on at the I-Hotel."

Everybody's Books was groundbreaking for its era. It featured revolutionary literature and materials on socialism from China to radical thought provoking philosophies on the labor

Everybody's Books was the first Asian American bookstore in the country.



"In those days, people were radical, because they felt the system was screwed up and it proved that it wasn't set up to help our community succeed. This is why we fight and this is why we're radical."—Harvey Dong

movement to struggles of resistance in Third World countries. It promoted Asian American history from Filipino, Chinese and Japanese writers who had

recorded their observations in American society from the often ignored Asian immigrant viewpoint. The bookstore also helped to stock readers for newly formed Asian American Studies classes at San Francisco State University and Cal.

"We had just got done with college and were moved by the '69 Student Strike," said Dong. "A group of us wanted to do something for the people in the community. Everybody's Books became a place where people would come to share their thoughts and ideas, no matter how radical they were, you could always find people who felt the same way as you did."

Dong remembers that some of his best customers were legendary I-Hotel icon Felix Ayson, who arrived with thousands of other Filipino immigrants, known as the "Manongs," to the West Coast after the 1900's. He said Olden Ng, a Chinese elder who became a polished public speaker for the San Francisco Labor Council in the 1930's was also a frequent patron.

Both men had come to America prior to Civil Rights legislation and were subjected to harsh labor conditions and discriminatory laws that prevented them from being treated as equals to the dominant society.

"This is why we started the bookstore," Dong said. "The stories of the people can never be forgotten. Just as we were fascinated with their stories, they were also concerned about listening to our ideas and experiences."

Leading up to the eviction, Dong observed that the media had spread propaganda declaring that the young radical youth were misleading the elders who had lived in the I-Hotel. He said the media spun the issue implying that the system of laws would somehow take care of these aged tenants who had nowhere else to go.

"In those days, people were radical, because they felt the system was screwed up and it proved that it wasn't set up to help our community succeed," he said. "This is why we fight and this why we're radical."

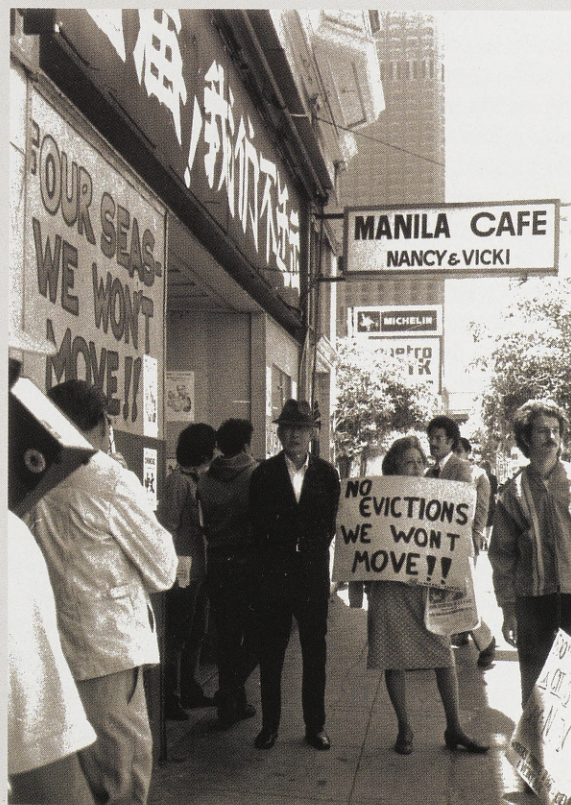
On Aug. 4th 1977, Dong stood arm-in-arm with thousands of other I-Hotel supporters and was whacked with police batons and kicked and punched. He watched in disbelief as the San Francisco Police and Sheriffs departments dragged out protesters and escorted the remaining elders who stayed

to the bitter end to try and protect their low-income housing.

"Everyone was traumatized, even the young people who were there and are adults today," said Dong.

More importantly, the elders had lost their housing and the storefronts, one-by-one, were destroyed and boarded up for good. The tragedy ended the eight year struggle to stave off evictions against the development of a parking garage.

Until today, the site on Kearny and Jackson Streets has remained a hole in the ground and serves as a wound in the Asian American community. With news that 104-units of low-income senior housing, a Manilatown center and performing arts space, Chinese school and a tea garden will begin construction, Dong is now able to tell his students a happier ending to the International Hotel struggle.













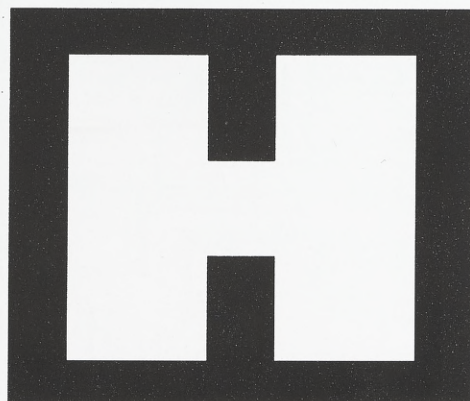
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*Manilatown Heritage Foundation*

*St. Mary's Chinese Schools & Center/Archdiocese*

By the International Hotel Senior Housing, Inc.





# Coming Home to Manilatown

How long shall we wait  
 there is more than dust  
 tribal ashes echo in the wind  
 crying out like wounded carabaos  
 we should take back our life  
 who will come to this place  
 who will visit with the manongs  
 we all dream of a place  
 to gather with them  
 the heavy rains pound stories  
 wailing, wailing, wailing  
 never leaving  
 sweeping away the dirt  
 from the international hotel  
 i see the manongs reaching out  
 how does one pass this place  
 travelers carry journals  
 they know the place of the manongs  
 to them...nothing fades away  
 what do we do  
 pass it along from manongs  
 to the children's hands  
 from manong to poet  
 from manong to friend  
 from manong to community worker  
 from manong and manang to neighbors  
 to the heart treading deep  
 where are my old friends  
 bound by manilatown dreams  
 and the international hotel  
 rising before our eyes  
 what a beautiful sight  
 now it's time to gather  
 with the community  
 waiting all these years  
 for things to bloom  
 we know the struggle  
 and solitude of the manongs  
 we leaned our body and soul  
 in the dark shadows  
 against the international hotel  
 the ground moans and moans and howls  
 like wolves deserted and forgotten  
 the international hotel  
 stretched  
 far across the pacific ocean  
 manilatown winds zigzagged around  
 the heart of the manongs  
 my mind is crammed with  
 a hundred thousand things  
 the manongs traveled a thousand roads  
 i remember how manong alagon  
 cooked squid adobo for the  
 international hotel celebration  
 all came to feast.

Al Robles





# FILIPINO American

